

PHILATELIC LEPIDOPTERA: 1954-1957

by MARION E. SMITH

Nations of the world are much like insect taxonomists — forever creating new “species” (of postage stamps) and thereby rendering even the most complete check-lists obsolete. Since the previous notes on this subject (Smith, 1954 and 1955, and Wren, 1955), new issues of philatelic Lepidoptera have appeared from at least eight countries; in addition, correspondents have called to my attention several earlier stamps omitted from the first article.

Omitted from the previous list of stamps portraying Lepidoptera, issued through 1953, were several in which a butterfly plays only a minor role in the design. For calling attention to two of these, the writer is indebted to Dr. SUMIO NAGASAWA, of Osaka, Japan, a frequent contributor to *Tokai Philately* on entomological issues. Czechoslovakia in 1952 issued a set of two stamps (A 201: #512 - 2 koruna, and 513 - 3k.) to publicize the International Conference for the Protection of Children held that year. The stamps show a woman with three children, one of them with a butterfly poised on her hand. The insect is almost certainly a Cabbage Butterfly, *Pieris rapæ* or *P. brassicæ*. A Hungarian stamp of 1951 (#941, 40 filler), publicizing the International Day of Children, also shows children playing; a butterfly, species unrecognizable, is flying overhead.

A third omission was the 2-value 1953 issue of Mozambique (A27, #384 - 1 escuda, and #385 - 3e.). Issued in connection with a philatelic exhibition, the stamps bear reproductions in color of several of the country's earlier issues, including the 10c. value of the 1952 set of stamps featuring Lepidoptera; the butterfly shown is *Papilio dardanus tibullus* Kby.

For the three year period, 1953 through 1956, Switzerland heads the list of nations issuing stamps portraying Lepidoptera — both in the number of stamps (eight) and in their quality. The Swiss Christmas stamps of the *Pro Juventute* series have for the past seven years (1950 through 1956) featured insects (the prior seven issues pictured Swiss wild flowers). The insects appear in excellent detail and full natural color against a contrasting background, with a delicate tracery in white of the foodplant or a habitat plant. These semi-postal stamps, on sale and valid for postage for a limited time only, bear a tax of ten centimes each, in addition to regular postage rates, which is used for child welfare work. (An illustrated booklet, in French, German, or Italian, giving information in a popular vein concerning the insects and the stamps will be sent by the Secretariat Générale of *Pro Juventute*, Zurich, upon receipt of an international reply coupon for each issue desired.) In addition to the eight Lepidoptera, the recent series show a bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris* L.) and an Ascalaphid (*Ascalaphus libelluloides*), 1954; a horntail (*Urocerus gigas* L.), 1955; and a blue ground beetle (*Carabus intricatus* L.), 1956. The Lepidoptera portrayed are as follows:

1954

- 10 plus 10 centimes — Garden Tiger Moth (*Arctia caia* L.) — Arctiidae — with leaves and seed-head of Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). A widely distributed northern species, with races in North America; one of the largest of Arctiids.
- 40 plus 10 — Old World Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon* L.) — Papilionidae — with leaves and flower of Wild Carrot, (*Daucus carota*). A widely distributed northern species, with races in North America.

1955

- 10 plus 10 — Peacock Butterfly (*Nymphalis io* L.) — Nymphalidae — with leaves of the common Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica* L.) Widely distributed in Europe and adjacent areas of Asia.
- 30 plus 10 — Yellow Tiger Moth (*Arctia flavia* L.) — Arctiidae — with leaves and seed-head of Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Limited to a few localities in the Alps, but occurring in central China, the insect spends two winters in the larval stage.
- 40 plus 10 — Apollo Butterfly (*Parnassius apollo* L.) — Papilionidae — with leaves and flowers of a *Sedum*, probably *S. album*, a favorite food-plant. A widely-distributed Palearctic species, with many races; the illustration compares well with SEITZ's figure of *P. apollo bartholomæus* Stich., of the Bavarian Alps.

1956

- 10 plus 10 — Carniolan Burnet (*Zygæna carniolica* Scop.) — Zygaenidae — with leaves and flowers of Sainfoin or Holy Clover (*Onybrichis sativa*), an important forage crop. Widely distributed in Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia, with many color varieties.
- 20 plus 10 — Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris* L.) — Nymphalidae — with leaves and catkins of the Sallow or Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*). Widely distributed in Europe, with many varieties.
- 40 plus 10 — Large or Cabbage White (*Pieris brassicæ* L.) — with a cabbage leaf (*Brassica* sp.). Widespread in Europe and western Asia.

The Apollo Butterfly, shown on the 1955 Swiss stamp, also appeared in 1954 on an anti-TB semi-postal of Finland (#B127, 15 plus 3 markka). The design is in red on white paper; the insect, pictured on what appears to be a rose, represents the Scandinavian race of the species (*P. apollo apollo* L.).

The Old World Swallowtail, figured on the 1954 Swiss stamp, appeared again (but less well portrayed) in 1955 on a 1.40 koruna stamp of Czechoslovakia; the stamp design is in black on yellow paper.

France, on April 7, 1956, issued a twelve franc stamp commemorating the date of birth of J. H. FABRE (1923 to 1915). The stamp, designed by the artist MARCEL EMILE FABRE, FABRE's grandson, shows the great naturalist examining a Peacock Moth (*Saturnia pyri* Schiff.) with a lens. A cicada, a mantis, and a scarab beetle, other insects made famous by FABRE's writings, occupy the corners of the stamp. On sale at the Tenth International Congress of Entomology in Montreal were first-day-of-issue cards bearing this stamp. Autographed by the author and cancelled at Serignan, the cards show

a pencil sketch of FABRE with a hand lens, similar to the design on the stamp, and in a lower corner, a Praying Mantis. Proceeds from their sale are being used for restoration of FABRE'S home at Serignan as a National Museum of Natural History.

In June, 1956, Japan issued a beautifully executed 75 sen stamp showing the Great Purple Emperor (*Sasakia charonda* Hewitson) in natural colors on a red background. This butterfly, family Nymphalidæ, is known as the *oo-murasaki* (the Great Purple), and is popularly called the national butterfly of Japan. (It also occurs in China.) A special envelope for use on the first day of issue was designed by Dr. TEISO ESAKI, then president of the Entomological Society of Japan and member of the Lepidopterists' Society, and an ardent collector of Lepidoptera on stamps. The design shows the butterfly, in color, and its larva and pupa, on a twig of the foodplant, *Celtis chinensis* Persoon, a Hackberry, called *Enoki* in Japan. The envelope also bears a special first-day-of-issue cancellation consisting of a reproduction of the butterfly and a background of the giant cedars in Inokashira Park, Tokyo, where the butterfly formerly was abundant. Although in recent years the species has become rare, it is still a favorite for rearing by school boys.

In September, 1956, a 10 bani stamp picturing the Black-Veined White (*Aporia crataegi* L.) was issued by Romania. The pierid butterfly is rather crudely done in black and pale yellow-green, on a purple background. Helpfully, however, the stamp bears both the scientific name and the common one (*Nalbarul*). Widespread in Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa, this species is often a serious pest on fruit trees.

The final stamp to appear in 1956 came from Jugoslavia, in October, as a 70 dinar value of an Olympic Games issue. Of unusual interest, this set portrays athletes actively engaged in various sports, each one accompanied by a simple sketch of an animal capable of much the same movement. The 70 d. stamp shows a woman tennis (?) player, running for a flying ball; a butterfly silhouette occupies the corner of the stamp.

One further issue of stamps which should be mentioned for the 1954-1956 period has been called to my attention by Dr. TEISO ESAKI, of Fukuoka, Japan, to whom I am also indebted for the information on the Japanese issue. This is the "local post" issue of 1954 of Herm Island, one of the Channel Islands of Great Britain. Although not valid for international postage, being used only locally, these stamps are nevertheless of entomological interest. Of a series of twelve triangular stamps portraying various natural objects, three show butterflies. These, somewhat inaccurately portrayed, are identified by Dr. ESAKI as follows:

1½ pence — Old World Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon* L.); Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris* L.); and a small butterfly not to be identified, purple and yellow.

2½ p. — Monarch (*Danaus plexippus* L.); White Admiral (*Limenitis camilla* L.); and a small unrecognizable butterfly, blue-green and orange.

6 p. — Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui* L.); Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta* L.); and a small unrecognizable butterfly, ultramarine and red.

1957 ADDITIONS

The only 1957 philatelic Lepidoptera which have come to my attention are those belonging to the Swiss *Pro Juventute* set, the seventh and reportedly the final issue of that series to be devoted to insects. Of the four insects depicted, one is the Gilded Cetonia or Rose Beetle (*Cetonia aurata* L.), a scarab beetle; the other three are Lepidoptera.

The Clouded Sulphur (*Colias croceus* Fourcroy, family Pieridæ) appears on the 10 + 10 c. stamp, with a background of leaves of a Vetch (*Vicia* sp.), one of its foodplants.

The Magpie Moth (*Abraxas grossulariata* L., family Geometridæ) is shown on the 20 + 10 c. stamp, with leaves and fruit of one of its foodplants, the Gooseberry (*Ribes grossularia*).

On the 40 + 10 c. stamp, a Red Underwing (*Catocala electa* Bkh., family Noctuidæ), known locally as "The Chosen One", is shown on a cluster of insect-eaten leaves of Willow (*Salix* sp.), its foodplant.

References

- Smith, Marion E., 1954. Philatelic Lepidoptera. *Lepid. News* 8: 13-16.
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 Wren, George R., 1955. A note on Lepidoptera on postage stamps. *Lepid. News* 9: 12.

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NEW FOOD PLANTS IN TEXAS FOR *PAPILIO MULTICAUDATUS*

On the 6 August 1955 while passing the time of day with my next door neighbor, Dr. FRANCIS X. BURDA, I observed a large chrysalis below his window sill. With his permission it was removed and placed in a container for observation. On 24 September 1955 a female *Papilio multicaudatus* Kirby emerged. Even before my finding the chrysalis a search was on to discover the southwest Texas host plant preferences of this species. The only likely host plant in the neighborhood seemed to be Plum which grows in Dr. BURDA's yard. Although *P. multicaudatus* is frequently seen from early spring to late fall in Bexar County, Texas, it appears never to stop but is always on the wing.

The mystery was solved when on 9 September 1957 a female was observed ovipositing on *Ligustrum vulgare* L. along the San Antonio River in the heart of downtown San Antonio, Texas. Needless to say the plant is found throughout the city and not more than fifty feet from where the chrysalis was found. Two eggs were recovered. One of the two was reared to the pupa stage 18 November 1957.

Another surprise came when on 3 November 1957 a larva was found on *Ptelea trifoliata* L. Larvæ of *Papilio cresphontes* are commonly found upon this plant, but this was a first for *P. multicaudatus*. More than 30 larvæ have since been found.

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